

6/24/05

Oops! Musings about an apostrophe

June 9, 2005

Troubling issues

Unknowingly, the voucher advocates rallying outside the Florida Supreme Court are perhaps the best testimony *against* Opportunity Program's success rate, Gov. Jeb Bush's taxpayer support for private education.

These people don't even recognize the glaring grammar error in the signs they display, one on the level usually learned in elementary school: use of the apostrophe. Public education correctly spells it "guarantees," with no apostrophe.

More important -- and more serious -- is the statement of the Bush representative in the lawsuit for vouchers that legislators have the "quintessential power" to spend money as they want.

Where did I get the odd notion that legislators were to be voices of the people? Back in public education, I suppose.

Ona Barfield

St. Cloud

Unintentional, perhaps

In reference to the article on the front page of Wednesday's Local & State section, "High court hears voucher challenge": Are the private-school voucher supporters being ironic, or is the misplaced apostrophe (that appears on TWO of the signs) unintentional?

It is used correctly, as a possessive, in the term "Florida's constitution," but it is unnecessary when placed in the word "guarantees."

Where is Mr. Language Person, Dave Barry, when you need him?

He would truly appreciate this situation!

Janet Kane

Windermere

Approve vouchers

I couldn't help but think of Lynne Truss' book *Eats, Shoots & Leaves: The Zero Tolerance Approach to Punctuation* when I saw the picture of the student holding up the sign with the possessive (sic) form of "guarantee" on it.

I hope the vouchers are approved. Obviously, they could use the education.

Bill Sowell

Deland

High quality

Surely, surely, SURELY that cannot be an apostrophe in the word "guarantee's," as in "Florida's Constitution Guarantee's Me a High Quality Education"?! That's appalling.

Someone certainly needs a "high quality education" from somewhere, with an emphasis on intensive apostrophe remediation.

Sincerely your's (that's a joke, people)

Sally William's (that's also a joke)

Longwood

Response

Letters to the Editor, Orlando Sentinel, June 12

Stooping low

I was one of more than 2,000 parents and children who traveled Tuesday to Tallahassee from Orlando to show the Supreme Court how strongly I feel about school choice.

On Thursday the *Sentinel* chose to publish not just one, but four letters from readers ridiculing sign holders for a misplaced apostrophe. Almost every parent and student in that crowd was low-income and minority. Although traditionally denied a political voice, we worked tirelessly to attend this rally because nothing is more important to us than our children's futures.

Every day, CEOs, lawyers and, yes, even newspapers, make typographical errors. Harping on them is petty and a clear refusal to address the real issue at stake, which is the educational future of 200,000 Florida students.

I'm not surprised there are people who would write such letters, but I am surprised the *Sentinel* stooped so low as to print four of them. You should maintain your newspaper's "Reader Views" section as a public forum for serious dialogue of the issues at stake.

Elizabeth Walker

Altamonte Springs